(e) how many incidents did take place during the last three years, wherein Sri Lankan Navy harassed Indian fishermen, giving details of each incident; and

(f) what steps are taken to put to an end this increasing menace of Sri Lankan Navy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes Sir. We have information that six Indian fishing trawlers with 26 fishermen were taken into custdy by Sri Lankan Navy on 14-2-95 inside Sri Lankan waters at location five nautical miles north off Talaimannar between 0500-0600 hrs.

(b) to (d) At the intervention of the Indian High Commission in Colombo, all the six trawlers, along with the 26 crew members were released the next day i.e. on 15-2-95 by the Government of Sri Lanka. The Tamil Nadu Government has confirmed safe return of the fishermen and their trawlers at Rameshwaram.

(e) During the last three years, (1992, 1993 and 1994), 41 incidents of harassment/firing/other attacks on Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan Navy were reported. Of these, 32 incidents involved firing while 9 incidents were of other attacks. A total of 25 fishermen were reported killed and 54 reported injured in these incidents.

(f) The Government of India has taken up strongly each incident with the Government of Sri Lanka, expressing its concern and requesting for expeditious release and/or compensation for injury/damage as appropriate. Bilateral discussions were held in October, 1993 and in March, 1994 to discuss measures for preventing such incidents of attack on Indian fishermen in future. Both sides are agreed that there is need to implement effective measures devised to prevent recurrence of such incidents. The issue was also discussed during visits of the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka in April, 94 and again in December, 94. All relevant aspects of this matter continue under discussion between the two Governments. Further talks on this subject are likely to take place shortly.

Establishment of Consulates in Bangalore

1302. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any request from the Karnataka State to establish Consulates of developed countries like United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany and Netherland in Bangalore: and

(b) if so, what is the state of progress for establishment of each of the Consulates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In accordance with the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963, establishment of Consular Relations between two States take place by mutual consent. It is for the foreign Governments desirous of opening Consular Officers/Posts, to convey their intentions to the receiving State through diplomatic channels. While examining such proposals/requests, inter alia, the principle of reciprocity is normally observed. No such request has been received from these countries.

Presentation of Passport applications by travel agents

1303. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what are the reasons for which the travel agents are not empowered to present applications for passports in the Passport Offices, causing considerable inconvenience to individuals who have to stand in long queues for presentation of the same and for answering bureaucratic